

Cookie Notice

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. You agree to our use of cookies by closing this message box or continuing to use our site. To find out more, including how to change your settings, see our [Cookie Policy](#)

<http://www.djreprints.com>.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-students-help-america-innovate-1542066465>

OPINION | COMMENTARY

Chinese Students Help America Innovate

The administration considers a visa ban. What a terrible idea.

By Philip J. Hanlon and Matthew J. Slaughter

Nov. 12, 2018 6:47 p.m. ET



Graduates of Columbia University wave Chinese flags during their commencement ceremony in New York, May 16.
PHOTO: MICHAEL NAGLE/ZUMA PRESS

The Dartmouth alumni WeChat group is buzzing with the recent news that the U.S. government may ban Chinese citizens from attending American colleges. Such a ban would damage American higher education. More important, it would dampen the country's capacity for economic innovation.

Foreign students often choose to study in the U.S. because they aim to apply here what they learn at our world-class schools. A Kauffman Foundation study found that immigrants accounted for 25% of all new high-tech companies founded from 2006 through 2012. The immigrant share of all U.S. entrepreneurs rose from 16.7% in 1995 to 27.1% in 2008. Since 2001, immigrants from China have played one of the largest roles in this increase. Research has shown that immigrants who come on a student visa are likelier to start a company than either native-born Americans with similar education or other immigrants. Student-visa immigrants earn higher wages, receive more patents and commercialize more inventions.

The outsize and growing role of Chinese students in American innovation is especially evident in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Chinese students in U.S. STEM programs are often more productive than students from other countries. One study of 16,000 doctoral candidates in 161 U.S. chemistry departments found that Chinese students wrote more and better papers than other international students—on par with their U.S. classmates who had been awarded prestigious National Science Foundation fellowships.

Most Chinese STEM graduates don't want to take their skills back. Between 2012 and 2015, 83% of Chinese students who completed doctorates in science or engineering in

Cookie Notice

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. You agree to our use of cookies by closing this message box or continuing to use our site. To find out more, including how to change your settings, see our [Cookie Policy](#)

remain. Among foreign-born students who received science and engineering doctorates in America in 2005, 90% of those from China were still in the U.S. a decade later, the highest rate of any country. The figures for Europe and South America were 65% and 50%, respectively. And of the 464,000 foreign-born holders of science and engineering doctorates in the U.S. in 2015, China accounted for 22.4%, more than any other country.

Foreign-born students won't stop being innovators if the U.S. decides to keep them out. They will stop being innovators in America. America's loss—of new ideas, new companies, new jobs—would be the rest of the world's gain. Why close the door to so many great innovators when we need them?

Mr. Hanlon is president of Dartmouth College. Mr. Slaughter is dean of its Tuck School of Business.

Copyright ©2017 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.